

New FBI Chief Vows to Stress Hoover's Goals

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Acting FBI Director L. Patrick Gray III vowed last night that under his supervision the bureau will continue its controversial investigations of those who allegedly threaten the nation's internal security.

Speaking to the fourth annual Crime Control Conference of the governor of Mississippi, Gray warned that "violent conduct" in the exercise of free speech and assembly "is not protected by the Constitution, the Bill of Rights," or decisions of the Supreme Court.

"Our Constitution is not a suicide pact," he added.

The speech, Gray's first major one outside Washington since President Nixon named him as temporary replacement for the late J. Edgar Hoover, was a tough statement that was apparently intended to reassure those who fear that he will drastically change the FBI.

Just after his appointment earlier this month, Gray made headlines with his plans to modernize and reform FBI policy and procedure.

He startled many old hands, for example, with his announcement that for the first time in nearly 50 years women could apply for positions as special agents of the FBI and the bureau would make a concerted effort to hire more members of minority groups.

During last night's speech in Biloxi, Miss., Gray repeatedly referred to the "legacy" of Hoover and to his own intention to carry on in the late director's tradition.

He assured the Mississippians that he will reject any suggestion of turning the FBI

into a "national police force." "The FBI must—and will—continue to show full respect for the sovereignty of the state and local authorities," Gray declared.

The new director also stressed that the FBI would continue to use electronic surveillance, but only with the approval of the Attorney General and the authority of a federal court order in every instance.

"FBI electronic surveillances are instituted and maintained in a manner designed to afford the fullest protection of individual liberties, while at the same time, upholding society's right to protect itself against the ravage of organized crime," Gray said.

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"Breakdown of Courts" Echoing sentiments frequently expressed by former Attorney General John N. Mitchell, Gray deplored "the breakdown of our courts" which he said "may ensure the rupture of our social fabric and guarantee that might will be right."

He saved his harshest words, however, for attorneys who he said "exploit misunderstanding ... encourage confrontation (and) appeal to those who place rule by mob about rule by law."

In an obvious reference to William Kunstler, lawyer for the "Chicago 7" and for rebellious prisoners at Attica, N.Y., last year, Gray asked "is it any wonder that disrespect for law, contempt for authority and distorted values prevail among those to whom this activist directs his strongest appeal?"